(b) if so, what additional facilities are now available to the air passengers at the airport; and

(c) if not, by when the work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (c) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has developed Nagpur airport as model airport for limited international operations. AAI has constructed a New Terminal Building with all modern passenger facilities at an estimated cost of Rs. 8.87 crores and commissioned it in April, 1996. This terminal can accommodate 700 passengers. The runway resurfacing has also been completed at a cost of Rs. 4.14 crores.

Closure of Srinagar Airport for upgradation

2924. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Sirnagar Airport has been closed for Upgradation; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to solve the difficulties of passengers and tourists arriving from abroad for visit to Kashmir?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Srinagar airport which belongs to Indian Air Force (IAF) has been temporarily closed for flight operations from 8.6.98 for recarpeting of the runway. Civil flights are being operated from Awantipore Air Force Station. Airports Authority of India and IAF have provided all necessary passenger facilities at Awantipore Air Force Station.

Financial help from European Consortium of Banks for aircraft acquisition

2925. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the sanctions have hit Indian Airlines' plan to raise $100 million from a European Consortium of banks for aircraft acquisition;

(b) what was the estimate of original purchase cost and how much Indian Airlines will have to shell out now for making an initial payment; and

(c) in what manner Indian Airlines propose to raise the required money for buying aircraft indicating budgetary provision made in current year's budget?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Indian Airlines, at present, has no proposal for raising USD 100 million from any European Consortium of Banks for aircraft acquisition.

(b) and (c) Indian Airlines, presently have a proposal to acquire six 50 seater aircraft. The estimated cost for the acquisition of these six 50 seater aircraft is about Rs. 450 cores. Amount to be paid as initial payment will be decided at the time of negotiations.

In the Capital Budget Estimates of the Company for the year 1998-99, an amount of Rs. 35 crores has been provided for making advance payment towards the proposed induction of six 50 seater aircraft. The project for the acquisition of six 50 seater aircraft is proposed to be financed through External Commerical Borrowings.

Renaming the New Cochin Airport

2926. SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation to name the new airport in Cochin (nedumbassrry) after Adi Shankaracharya, whose birth place Kalady is near to the airport; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereon?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A view will be taken in the matter after due consideration.

Discrimination in Reimbursement of Medical Claims in Air India

2927. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India medical department has received any complaints regarding discrimination in reimbursement of medical claim for eye operations under contributory medical scheme; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken on the complaints?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A representation was received for reimbursement of medical expenses for Myopia Correction. The claim was rejected as the same was not admissible under the Contributory Medical Benefit Scheme and Employees Benefit Scheme.

Reimburesement of Medical Expenses Under Contributory Medical Scheme of Air India

2928. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the rules for reimbursement of medical expenses for Karectomy Eye operation under the Contributory Medical Scheme of Air India;

(b) the number of applications considered for above reimbursement and those rejected in the years 1996, 1997 and 1998; and

(c) the reasons for each rejections of above claim, if any?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Medical expenses for photo Refractive Keratectomy for Myopia correction (Correction of eye sight only) are neither reimbursable under the Contributory Medical Benefits Scheme (CMBS) nor Emlpoyes Medical Benefits Scheme (EMBS) in Air India.

(b) and (c) Details are as under:—

Year	No. of application received for reimbursement	Passed	Rejected
1996	2	1	1
1997	NIL	—	—
1998	NIL	—	—

The claim passed related to Keratectomy done alongwith Viteresectomy and Tridectomy for retinal detachment and was s admissible under CMBS. The rejected claim related to Keratectomy as it was not admissible under CMBS and EMBS.

Opening of Post Offices, STD/PCO and Fax Booths in Assam

2929. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Punchayats in Assam which have demanded for Opening of post offices STD/PCO and Fax booths during the last one year;

(b) the total number of post offices, STD/PCO, Fax etc. opened in Assam during this period; and

(c) whether steps are being taken by Government to open the new post offices in the State; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) *Postal*:

No demand has been received from Panchayat for opening of Post Office during last one year.